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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/070,666	09/09/2002	Matthias Rusing	005430.00002	2873

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EXAMINER

MCELWAIN, ELIZABETH F

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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1638

DATE MAILED: 09/26/2005

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/070,666

Applicant(s)

RUSING ET AL.

Examiner

Elizabeth F. McElwain

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 28 June 2005.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1,3-15 and 17-33 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) 7,9,11-13,31 and 32 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1,3-6,8,10,14,15,17-30 and 33 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☒ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 09 September 2002 is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☒ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☒ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| 3) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date <u>3/8/02;5/902</u> | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Election/Restrictions

1. Applicant's election of Group I, claims 1, 3-6, 8-10, 14-30 and 33 in the reply filed on June 28, 2005 is acknowledged. Because applicant did not distinctly and specifically point out the supposed errors in the restriction requirement, the election has been treated as an election without traverse (MPEP § 818.03(a)). Please note that claim 9 was inadvertently omitted from the restriction requirement. Since claim 9 belongs with Group I, claim 9 has been examined in the present office action, and the indication that claim 9 is "withdrawn" should be changed in the next response.

Specification

2. The disclosure is objected to because it contains an embedded hyperlink and/or other form of browser-executable code. Applicant is required to delete the embedded hyperlink and/or other form of browser-executable code. See MPEP § 608.01.

Drawings

3. New corrected drawings in compliance with 37 CFR 1.121(d) are required in this application because figures 2-9 and 12 are illegible. Applicant is advised to employ the services of a competent patent draftsman outside the Office, as the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office no longer prepares new drawings. The corrected drawings are required in reply to the Office action to avoid abandonment of the application. The requirement for corrected drawings will not be held in abeyance.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 101

4. 35 U.S.C. 101 reads as follows:

Whoever invents or discovers any new and useful process, machine, manufacture, or composition of matter, or any new and useful improvement thereof, may obtain a patent therefor, subject to the conditions and requirements of this title.

Claims 1, 3-6, 17-19 and 33 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 101 because the claimed invention is directed to non-statutory subject matter. The claims are drawn to “a nucleic acid”, which is not distinguished from that which would occur in nature. Amendment of the claims to read “isolated nucleic acid” would overcome the rejection.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

5. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

6. Claim 30 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

Claim 30 is indefinite in that it is unclear what would constitute a nucleic acid “consisting essentially of SEQ ID NO: 1”. Amendment of the claim to recite “comprising” or “consisting of” would overcome the rejection.

7. The following is a quotation of the first paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall contain a written description of the invention, and of the manner and process of making and using it, in such full, clear, concise, and exact terms as to enable any person skilled in the art to which it pertains, or with which it is most nearly connected, to make and use the same and shall set forth the best mode contemplated by the inventor of carrying out his invention.

8. Claims 1, 3, 4, 6, 8-10, 14, 15, 17-30 and 33 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the written description requirement. The claim(s) contains subject matter which was not described in the specification in such a way as to reasonably convey to one skilled in the relevant art that the inventor(s), at the time the application was filed, had possession of the claimed invention. The claims are drawn to a nucleic acid encoding a Tetrahymena delta-6 desaturase having at least 8 nucleotides from SEQ ID NO: 1 or functional variants thereof having at least 70% identity to SEQ ID NO: 1 and processes of preparing said nucleic acid and an organism transformed with said nucleic acid. The claims are also drawn to a nucleic acid encoding SEQ ID NO: 2 or functional variants thereof having at least 70% sequence identity to SEQ ID NO: 2. However, the specification does not describe the structural features required to confer the claimed functional activity of encoding a Tetrahymena delta-6 desaturase, and the prior art does not teach said structural features that distinguish a Tetrahymena delta-6 desaturase coding sequence from other sequences. In addition, the specification discloses SEQ ID NO: 1, yet there is no evidence provided that SEQ ID NO: 1 encodes a delta-6 desaturase.

“A description of a genus of cDNAs may be achieved by means of a recitation of a representative number of cDNAs defined by nucleotide sequence, falling within the scope of the genus or of a recitation of structural features common to members of the genus, which features constitute a substantial portion of the genus.” In addition, “The name cDNA is not in itself a written description of that DNA; it conveys no distinguishing information concerning its identity. While the example provides a process for obtaining human insulin-encoding cDNA, there is no further information in the patent pertaining to that cDNA’s relevant structural or physical

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characteristics; in other words, it thus does not describe human insulin cDNA . . . Accordingly, the specification does not provide a written description of the invention". See *University of California v. Eli Lilly and Co.*, 119 F. 3d 1559; 43 USPQ 2d 1398, 1406 (Fed. Cir. 1997).

Therefore, given the lack of written description in the specification with regard to the structural and physical characteristics of the claimed compositions, one skilled in the art would not have been in possession of the genus claimed at the time this application was filed.

9. Claims 1, 3-6, 8-10, 14-30 and 33 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the enablement requirement. The claim(s) contains subject matter which was not described in the specification in such a way as to enable one skilled in the art to which it pertains, or with which it is most nearly connected, to make and/or use the invention. The claims are drawn to a nucleic acid encoding a *Tetrahymena* delta-6 desaturase having at least 8 nucleotides from SEQ ID NO: 1 or functional variants thereof having at least 70% identity to SEQ ID NO: 1 and processes of preparing said nucleic acid and an organism transformed with said nucleic acid. The claims are also drawn to a nucleic acid encoding SEQ ID NO: 2 or functional variants thereof having at least 70% sequence identity to SEQ ID NO: 2. However, the specification does not disclose any sequences having delta-6 desaturase activity. The specification discusses the preparation of expression constructs and transformation with said constructs. However, there is no indication of what sequences are provided in the constructs. There is not description of SEQ ID NO: 1 provided in a construct and transformed into an organism or the increase of delta-6 desaturase activity in a transformed organism.

In addition, even if it were shown that SEQ ID NO: 1 encoded a protein having delta-6 desaturase activity, sequence homology is not sufficient to predict function of encoded sequences. See the teachings of Doerks (TIG 14, no. 6: 248-250, June 1998), where it states that computer analysis of genome sequences is flawed, and “overpredictions are common because the highest scoring database protein does not necessarily share the same or even similar functions” (the last sentence of the first paragraph of page 248). Doerks also teaches homologs that did not have the same catalytic activity because active site residues were not conserved (page 248, the first sentence of the last paragraph). In addition, Smith et al (Nature Biotechnology 15:1222-1223, November 1997) teach that “there are numerous cases in which proteins of very different functions are homologous” (page 1222, the first sentence of the last paragraph). Also, Brenner (TIG 15, 4:132-133, April 1999) discusses the problem of inferring function from homology, stating that “most homologs must have different molecular and cellular functions” (see the second full paragraph of the second column of page 132, for example). Furthermore, Borks (TIG 12, 10:425-427, October 1996) teaches numerous problems with the sequence databases that can result in the misinterpretation of sequence data.

More specifically, identification of related sequences that will encode enzymes having a particular activity is particularly problematic in the enzymes involved in modifying fatty acids, and cannot be determined merely by similarity of DNA or amino acid sequences. Van de Loo et al teach that sequences encoding fatty acid hydroxylase activity are highly similar to other sequences that do not encode a hydroxylase, but instead encode a fatty acyl desaturase (see the abstract, at least). In fact, Broun et al teach that a change in only four amino acids will convert a desaturase gene to a hydroxylase gene (see the abstract, at least). Thus, if sequences are

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identified only by similarity to other sequences that are known to encode delta-6 desaturase activity, one cannot conclude that these other sequences also encode enzymes having delta-6 desaturase activity. In addition, De Luca teaches that modifying plant biosynthetic pathways by transforming plants with genes encoding enzymes involved in said pathway is highly unpredictable (see the paragraph bridging the columns on page 225N, for example), and that “on many occasions desired goals have been impossible to achieve” (see the last paragraph on page 228N). Therefore, both the identification of other genes encoding fatty acid modifying enzymes, and the modification of plant lipid composition by transforming a plant with said gene or a portion of said gene are highly unpredictable.

Furthermore, the specification fails to teach how one would use SEQ ID NO: 1 or positions 33 to position 1091 thereof, much less any 8 nucleotide fragment thereof.

Thus, given the unpredictability of identifying sequences that exhibit delta-6 desaturase activity from *Tetrahymena* and modifying the lipid composition of a plant or ciliate; the lack of guidance in the specification for identifying and characterizing sequences that exhibit delta-6 desaturase activity; the lack of working examples of delta-6 desaturase coding sequences, and the lack of working examples of sequences that encode proteins having the said activity; and the breadth of the claims, and use of said genes to modify a fatty acid; it would require undue experimentation by one skilled in the art to make and use the invention as broadly claimed.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

10. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

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A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

11. Claim 30 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Thomas (US Patent 5,614,393).

The claim is drawn to any functional variant of SEQ ID NO: 1. Applicant asserts that SEQ ID NO:1 encodes a desaturase.

Thomas teaches a delta-6 desaturase coding sequence (see Figure 5A).

No claims are allowed.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Elizabeth F. McElwain whose telephone number is (571) 272-0802. The examiner can normally be reached on increased flex time.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, W. Gary Jones can be reached on (571) 272-0745. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Elizabeth F. McElwain'.

Elizabeth F. McElwain, Ph.D.

Primary Examiner

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EFM